

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 32186 241530Z

22

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6472

INFO AMCONGEN HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

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CINCPAC HONOLULU 5821

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, TH, BM, CB, MY

SUBJ: THAI BORDER INCIDENTS

1. BANGKOK PRESS ON NOVEMBER 24 CARRIED STORIES OF RELATIVELY SMALL-SCALE INCIDENTS ALONG THAILAND'S BORDERS WITH CAMBODIA, BURMA AND MALAYSIA. IN HAT LEK AT THE EXTREME SOUTHERN TIP OF TRAT PROVINCE BORDERING CAMBODIA THERE HAS FOR PAST TWO DAYS REPORTEDLY BEEN SPORADIC FIGHTING BETWEEN THAI BORDER PATROL POLICE (BPP) AND KHMER TROOPS. REPORTS SAY THAT TWO CAMBODIAN SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN KILLED AND THREE THAI TROOPER SERIOUSLY WOUNDED. BPP ARE REPORTEDLY BEING SUPPORTED BY THAI NAVY GUNBOATS, AND SOME RESIDENTS ARE SAID TO BE LEAVING THE AREA. AS IS OFTEN THE CASE, PRESS MAY BE EXAGGERATING THE SERIOUSNESS OF WHAT IS PROBABLY ONE OF THE OCCASIONAL EXCHANGES OF FIRE WHICH OCCURS ALONG THE POORLY DELINEATED BORDER WITH CAMBODIA.

2. BANGKOK POST ALSO REPORTS THAT AN OFFICIAL PROTEST

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 32186 241530Z

WAS DELIVERED TO BURMESE AMBASSADOR IN BANGKOK NOV 22 ASK-

ING FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF THAI TRAWLER AND CREW AND COMPENSATION FOR TWO OTHER TRAWLERS ALLEGEDLY FIRED ON BY BURMESE GUNBOATS IN INCIDENT ON NOV 14. PROTEST NOTE ALSO REPORTEDLY ASKED THAT SMILAR INCIDENTS BE AVOIDED IN THE FUTURE.

3. FINAL BORDER INCIDENT IS REPORTED AS OCCURRING IN WHAT IS DESCRIBED AS DRIVE AGAINST COMMUNIST GUERRILLAS IN BETONG SALIENT IN SOUTHERN YALA PROVINCE BORDERING MALAYSIA. UPI REPORT OFSNOV 24 FROM KUALA LUMPUR STATES THAT THAI HAVE MOVED TROOPS INTO BETONG TO CLEAN OUT COMMUNIST SANCTUARIES, AND MALAYSIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE STEPPED UP SECURITY MEASURES ALONG BORDER TO PREVENT CTS FLEEING TO MALAYSIA.

4. COMMENT: CONSIDERING THAT THAILAND'S MAIN SECURITY DIFFICULTIES LIE ALONG THE LAO BORDER, THE CONCURRENT APPEARANCE OF THREE REPORTS OF TROUBLES IN OTHER BORDER AREAS DOUBTLESSLY EXAGGERATES THAILAND'S BORDER PROBLEMS. ALTHOUGH NONE OF THE THREE EVENTS CAN BE CONSIDERED SERIOUS, THEY DO, HOWEVER, POINT UP THE POSSIBILITY OF POTENTIAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE BORDER PATROL POICE, STRETCHED THINLY ALONG THAILAND'S EXTENSIVE LAND BORADERS. WHITEHOUSE

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